AN

ESTIMATE

OF THE

EXPENCE

OF MAKING A

NAVIGABLE CANAL

FROM

BURY ST. EDMUND'S, IN SUFFOLK;

TOGETHER WITH THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE INHABITANTS OF BURY ST. EDMUND'S TO PROMOTE THE DESIGN.

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ESTIMATE OF THE EXPENCE

OF MAKING A

NAVIGABLE CANAL

FROM

BURY ST. EDMUND'S, IN SUFFOLK,
TO MISTLEY, IN ESSEX.

According to a Survey made in May and June, 1790,

By JOHN RENNIE, Engineer, F. R. S. Ed.

	£. s. d.
The ſaid Canal to be 15 feet wide at bottom, 25 feet 8 inches at top, and 4 feet deep, with proper paſſing Places for the Barges, the Length 31 miles, 4 furlongs, 9 chains, and 50 links; the Purchaſe of Land for the ſaid Canal and neceſſary Reſervoir, together with the charge of all the works, the temporary damages to Lands and Mills, unforeſeen accidents, Engines, Utenſils, Superviſal, &c. being included.	72,909 : 12 : 9

☞ The Plan and Section, Engineer's Report, and Specification of the different Charges compriſed in the above Eſtimate, may be ſeen at Mr. Dickonson's, Attorney-at-law, in Bury; and Copies of the Plan and Section, as ſoon as completed, will be ſent to the principal towns intereſted in the ſcheme, for the public inſpection.

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REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE

APPOINTED TO PROMOTE

THE MAKING A NAVIGABLE CANAL FROM BURY ST. EDMUND'S.

To the Subſcribers to the Survey, and to the Public.

IN purſuance of the truſt with which we were honoured, by being appointed a Committee for the purpoſe of promoting a Canal Navigation from this place, we employed Mr. JOHN RENNIE, an engineer of experience and reputation, to take a ſurvey of the country which appeared moſt advantageous for the propoſed ſcheme; and we ſubmit to you his Eſtimate, and have ordered the Plan and Section of the projected Canal to be copied for the public inſpection; and we ſhall now beg leave to communicate a few Remarks on the ſubject, together with the beſt calculations we have been able to form on the Tonnage which the trade paſſing on the ſaid Canal will produce.

It is with pleaſure that we obſerve, by the Engineer's Report, the abſolute practicableneſs of the plan, and that the execution depends on two points only:—The opinion which the public may entertain of its utility, and the adequateneſs of the trade to pay the expence.

It is but lately that this kingdom has found out the benefit of Canal Navigations, a diſcovery which probably its numerous rivers, and the circumſtance of its being an Iſland, may have conſiderably retarded. France, Holland, Flanders, and many other countries in Europe, have advanced far before us in this ſcience, and have long tranſported the produce and merchandize of one province to another, by means of their numerous Canals, which are alſo uſed for the purpoſes of travelling, with unequalled ſafety by night and by day, and are a ſource of great employment and accommodation to the people. Advantages of this ſort have given riſe to ſome of the moſt buſy and populous cities in the world; and even in our own country, where the art has been but partially introduced, we have ſeen the commercial effects of it increaſing progreſſively from the æra of its eſtabliſhment.

The towns of Mancheſter, Birmingham, and Leeds, the ſeat of the Pottery in Staffordſhire, and many other places, are indebted for much of their ſucceſs to this improvement, by affording them a cheap, regular, and eaſy conveyance of the neceſſaries of life, the materials of their manufactories, and the produce of their induſtry; and the ports of Liverpool and Hull owe much of their aſtoniſhingly rapid increaſe of trade to the public ſpirit of the adventurers in Inland Navigation.

Experience has now confirmed this theory, and however problematical may be deemed many of the inventions of the preſent day, which tend to the ſaving of the labour of the human ſpecies, by ſubſtituting leſs expenſive machines, yet in a country already abounding with inhabitants, and in a diſtrict where employment for them is really wanted, there can be no doubt as to the propriety of adopting every plan that will abridge the labour of cattle, and which will operate with double advantage to the community by finding employment for the induſtrious poor, and by diverting the corn that now ſupports a great quantity of draught horſes, which will then be unneceſſary, to the ſuſtenance of our fellow-creatures.

The Manufacturer, the Merchant, the Land Owner, and the Occupier, are all intereſted in this ſcheme. Canals are the means of furniſhing the Manufacturer with his raw materials at a leſs expence, the food and fuel of the Artificer are brought at a cheaper rate, and manufactured goods find a more ready and leſs expenſive conveyance to their proper markets. It is therefore truly obſerved, that Navigations always benefit manufactories wherever they are already eſtabliſhed, and have frequently occaſioned the planting of many new ones in ſituations where it was impoſſible by other means to have introduced them. The Merchant alſo derives great advantage from theſe undertakings; indeed ports which were of trifling conſequence before, have, by being made the termination of Canals, riſen into ſudden wealth and ſplendour by the vaſt increaſe of their traffic. Nor are the Landholder and his tenants without a full ſhare of the benefit;—the riches in the bowels of the earth, the growth of their lands, and the comparative cheapneſs of their huſbandry, in conſequence of Inland Navigations, have added greatly to the value of their eſtates and occupations, and diſtant markets have conſumed their commodities. The public roads, the repairs of which are a very heavy charge, by means of Canals are more eaſily repaired, and they are alſo prevented from falling into decay, by removing from them the burden of heavy carriages, which are now generally paſſing on them in greater numbers at the worſt ſeaſon of the year.

The obvious and great advantages of a Canal Navigation over every other mode of conveyance, are its cheapneſs, certainty, and diſpatch. A Navigation carried along the current of a river muſt be frequently circuitous, and ſubject to all the inconveniencies ariſing from dry and rainy ſeaſons, from deficiency or ſuperfluity of water, which muſt produce delays that would be detrimental and expenſive. The firſt and greateſt advantage of a Canal is, that its navigation is equal and regular; for it is not ſo certain that a waggoner will come at an hour to his inn, as that a barge, floating on a Canal, will arrive at a ſtated time at its point of deſtination.

The time will always be certain, and if the Canal be properly formed, will always be leſs than that required to navigate a River; an artificial Cut will be drawn with fewer curves, which will ſhorten the diſtance, will have no ſtream either way to oppoſe the veſſels, and its works will be ſupported at a far leſs annual expence than thoſe of a River Navigation.

The country intended to be benefited by this Navigation is much in want of an eaſy and cheap communication with the Ocean. It abounds with Corn conſiderably above its own conſumption; and Coal, the demand for which is every day larger, is brought from a great diſtance, and much enhanced in price by a very expenſive land carriage. The Port with which the Canal is to communicate is exceedingly favourable to mercantile enterprize, is moſt conveniently ſituated in reſpect to the Metropolis, is extremely ſafe and commodious, poſſeſſes great ſuperiority to moſt others for lading and unlading, and is particularly eligible for regularity and diſpatch.

It muſt be allowed that the expence of this undertaking is conſiderable; but if, on a well-grounded calculation, the trade may be judged competent to maintain the works, and to diſcharge the intereſt of the ſum borrowed, the magnitude is of no real conſequence; and if we may judge from the ſucceſs of other Canals, ſomething may fairly be computed to ariſe from an increaſing trade: It has been ſhewn that Trade ſupports Navigation, and Navigation makes a grateful return by promoting the welfare of Trade.

It will be no ſmall advantage that this ſcheme in its formation and ſupport, as well as in its operation upon trade, will be a ſource of employment to great numbers of people, and be very different from raiſing an equal ſum to be ſpent at a diſtance from the ſpot where it is raiſed, or waſted in foreign war. The ſecurity to the Subſcribers for the ſum they may advance, will be unqueſtionably permanent and good, the bonds transferable without expence, the intereſt punctually paid, and not being affected by either war or peace, they will not be ſubject to the fluctuations and probable depreciation of the public funds.

The following Calculations of the quantities of Merchandize, and the Rates of Tonnage which thoſe articles will bear, will ſhew the adequateneſs of the Trade to ſupport the Expence.

	£	s.	d.
25,300 Tons of Corn, calculated to paſs annually 21 miles on this Canal, on an average diſtance, at the rate of 1½d. per Ton per Mile -	3320	0	0
14,000 Tons of Coal annually, calculated to paſs the ſame diſtance, at 1d. per Ton per Mile -	1225	0	0
3300 Tons of Grocery, Liquors, Bale Goods, Timber, Deals, Earth Ware, Salt and Iron, annually, calculated to paſs the ſame diſtance, at 2d. per Ton per Mile - - -	577	10	0
	£ 5122	10	0

It may be expected that we ſhould give our reaſons in ſupport of theſe calculations; and though it might be tedious to communicate the whole arithmetical operations which have been uſed to aſcertain the quantities, we ſhall endeavour to ſtate the data on which they are founded, which we think will ſufficiently ſhew that we have been careful not to exceed in our computation of any of the articles on which we have eſtimated; firſt of all premiſing, that admitting the above Rates of

Tonnage to be eſtabliſhed, the ſaving of expence in carriage would be very conſiderable on every article, in compariſon with any of the preſent modes of conveyance, to every part of the diſtrict affected by the Canal.

The computation on the Corn Trade has been made by eſtimating the growth of that commodity in a ſpace interſected by the Canal, extending Southward from Bury 20 miles in length, and on an average 12 miles in breadth, and alſo in a ſemicircle, whoſe radius is ſix miles, extending from Bury Northward.—Thus it will appear, that we have computed nothing for the growth of any article within Ten Miles from the Port, nor at any greater mean diſtance than Six Miles from each ſide of the Canal. We have alſo deducted 412 Acres out of every Thouſand contained in this diſtrict, for Graſs Lands, Woods, Heaths, and Commons; and from the annual produce of the remaining quantity, there has been a competent allowance made for Fallows, for Seed of Land, for Bread Corn for the Inhabitants in the towns and villages, for the conſumption in Beer, and for the maintenance of Horſes, Hogs, and Poultry; and there appears to us that there will be 252,925 Combs of Corn that will annually paſs the diſtance we have ſtated upon the Canal, which at Ten Combs to a Ton, amounts nearly to 25,300 Tons.

The other articles of Merchandize have likewiſe been calculated from the beſt evidence we have been able to obtain of the conſumption of them in the reſpective towns and villages within the before-mentioned diſtrict, drawing ſome collateral proofs to corroborate the ſtatement we have given from the preſent trade of Miſtley.

We have ſtrengthened our calculations by referring them to the judgment of a Gentleman whoſe knowledge in Agriculture and Commerce, and whoſe ſkill in inveſtigations of this kind, can only be exceeded by his Love to his Country, and by his exertions for its benefit; and we are happy that his opinion, as to the Corn Trade particularly, concurs with ours.

We have not calculated on the trade of the Canal for any article to be conſumed within Ten Miles of the Port, any more than on the Corn grown within that diſtance, nor have we eſtimated Beans, Peaſe, Graſs Seeds, Wool, or Butter, growing or produced in any part of the diſtrict; nor have we ſet down any thing for the intermediate traffic of articles not imported or exported, ſuch as Flour, Lime, Chalk, Stone, Bricks, Tiles, &c.

which, in the diſtance of upwards of 30 Miles, muſt be very conſiderable.

The full reliance we have on the abilities of the Engineer, whom we ſee engaged in buſineſs of much greater moment and difficulty*, leaves us no room to ſuppoſe the execution of the work will require a larger ſum than that contained in the Eſtimate; but allowing for the expences of an application to Parliament, for the intereſt of money during the time of making the Canal, and till buſineſs flows into its proper channel, and if alſo for the ſake of a round number we ſtate the coſt at 75,000l. or 750 Shares of 100l. each, the account will then ſtand as under:

	£	s.	d.
Annual Intereſt of 75,000l. at 5 per cent. - - -	3750	0	0
Annual Expence of maintaining the Works, collecting the Tonnage, &c. &c. being a proportional part to the ſum laid out, eſtimated from the known charge of other Canals	750	0	0
Annual Surplus - - -	622	10	0
Annual Income of the Canal as before	5122	10	0

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* Mr. Rennie has lately been appointed to make a ſurvey of the difficult parts of the Great Weſtern Canal, the Eſtimate for which is upwards of 200,000*l.*

This ſurplus, with whatever increaſe may ariſe after the entire completion of the whole Canal, not exceeding per cent *. on the ſum ſubſcribed, we conceive ſhould be divided as a profit to the Subſcribers; nor ſhould the redemption of the Canal be ſought for but in the additional ſurplus that may ariſe after paying the Subſcribers the annual intereſt of per cent. The firſt Subſcribers ſhould alſo, we think, be entitled, at their option, to have their Shares remain the longeſt unpaid, according to the priority of their ſubſcribing.

When the Trade of various uncalculated ſources ſhall be diverted to this Canal, which may juſtly be deemed the proper channel, as the diſtrict on which we have founded our calculations is exceedingly contracted, we truſt we ſhall not be thought too ardent in our expectations, that the final redemption of the Canal will be gradually accompliſhed, and from thence the public will experience the advantage of a reduction of the tolls proportionate to the diſcharge of the debt; and the Canal being at length their ſole property, the only charges to be ſupported will be thoſe of its neceſſary repairs and the expence of its Stewardſhip.

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* The Rate of Intereſt to be divided by Subſcribers is left to be determined by the public meeting hereafter mentioned.

To the Landed, Mercantile, and Trading Intereſts of the Country, we ſubmit theſe Obſervations; aſſuring them and the Subſcribers to the Survey, that we have in this buſineſs exerciſed our beſt judgment with the moſt ſcrupulous fidelity; and that we have been particularly cautious not to err on that ſide where it might be dangerous, by holding out the proſpect of a larger trade than we think will actually exiſt againſt any poſſible competition.

We now take our leave, earneſtly recommending to the public a candid inveſtigation of the Plan now laid before them, conceiving it to be of the utmoſt importance to their intereſts, to maintain their ſituation in the great commercial ſcale, amongſt the exertions of every other part of the kingdom; and eſteeming that this deſign will be highly beneficial and extenſively uſeful to the Community, and that many of the diſtreſſes of the Poor, conſequent on their poverty, may be hereby eſſentially alleviated.

Bury St. Edmund's, Dec. 27, 1790.

⁂ *A Public Meeting of the Inhabitants of Bury St. Edmund's, and the Subſcribers to the Survey, will ſoon be called by advertiſement, to determine upon further proceedings in this buſineſs, and to conſider of offering propoſals for raiſing the Sum of Money required for the undertaking.*

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